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The Human Cataclysm

JUST when the harvests were ripening in Europe and the peasants were planning for their autumn festivals; when the young were planning for happy culminations when the toll of the season should be over; a little cloud appeared on the southern sky and before the people could realize what was coming that cloud expanded until the whole sky was enshrouded, and the grim reaper appeared, not to save the harvest but to tread the fields underfoot; to blast a million hearts; to change the songs of the hopeful poor into wallings for the dead.

And for what? That long-cherished ambitions on the part of three or four rulers might be gratified or that some hundreds of thousands of men might die in the attempt. The original blame is upon Austria, for all the claim she has upon Serbia is really the claim that Serbia is in her way. The second and greatest criminal is Russia. Behind the race hates there is the smart that when her "far flung battle line" was extended too far and the further wings of it were being scooped by little Japan, she had no sympathy in Europe. Beyond all that is the long-cherished dream of securing an open way for her ships between the Black and the Mediterranean seas, and evidently she believes that as Turkey has just been devastated by a wasting war, now is the time for her to strike.

We can well believe the dispatches that said Germany had done her utmost to stop the conflict, for Germany is in a place so dangerous that nothing but the wisdom of her rulers and the valor of her soldiers can save her.

France is thinking of Alsace-Lorraine and the humiliation of 1871-72 and is eager for vengeance. She does not stop to recall the fact that so many of her young men died in the Napoleonic wars of a century ago that her people have not yet regained their full stature.

And Great Britain will not be able to keep out of the line of fire. One of the first questions that will have to be solved will be what will come when the English and German navies meet in war.

The prestige is with Great Britain. In the old days France and Spain had quite as fine ships as England, but they were always beaten.

If the fleets of Great Britain and Germany meet in combat on the one side will be the memories of Blake and Howard and Drake and Collingwood and Nelson and the rest to remember, on the other there will be no such memories to hold men up to the guns.

A great many of what are now beautiful ships will be but scrap iron when this thing is over.

We do not believe that the powers combining can crush Germany but there will be less arro-

gance on the part of German officers for a good many years to come.

But the war is a most shameful one. Every one of the chief movers has apparently been a warm advocate of arbitration by the Hague tribunal of any differences that might arise between them. In the light of present events how much are their professions worth?

The great shame is the suffering of the innocents. What of the poor peasants? What of the prayers of the mothers that if possible this cup might be put aside?

Surely before it is over the world will have grown most weary of kingly rule.

It may be the cataclysm was necessary that with clearer vision the people, whose eyes will have received the bath of blood, may have the strength to dictate the course of future governments. Men like the earth, have sometimes their earthquakes, sometimes like the air their cyclones to work their reforms.

As To An American Merchant Marine

WHEN our great civil war came the tonnage of the ships of the United States exceeded that of any other power including Great Britain.

Four years later it had been swept away, either through the privateers fitted out in England or by transfers to foreign flags.

In those four years, too, the material for building ships had been changed from wood to steel and the compound marine engine had so reduced the bulk and cost of fuel for ships, that even cheap products were carried in steamships and the wooden sail ship had become almost obsolete.

Great Britain took her old place as the commanding power on the ocean and has maintained it though in the meantime Germany had become a strong rival.

In the meantime, too, the congress of the United States has refused to take one step toward restoring our ocean prestige, though it has looked on and seen our country pay to foreign ships in fares and freights a steadily increasing sum until it now reaches \$300,000,000 per annum. In the past fifteen years it has amounted to more than the whole wealth of any one power of Europe with perhaps four exceptions.

It would seem as though the present would be an opportune time to begin the rehabilitation of our merchant marine, but we have no hope that any sensible steps to that end will be taken. At least up to date the examples of nations that have grown rich through their ships has counted for naught with our statesmen; neither has the fact that what is paid by our country to foreign ships is lost to our country forever, had any effect on our statesmen; neither has the further fact that had we a merchant marine commensurate with our place in the world, it would be giving a million of men fair wages that would at once be going into the active money circulation of the country.

Neither can our "statesmen" comprehend that an ample merchant marine would place our people in direct accord with the nations, and all

their opportunities would be open to our people.

But all that does not count with our statesmen. It is like the merchant that has a big store but refuses to own a delivery wagon lest the grain and hay merchant down the street might get rich selling him hay and grain for his horses.

The Poor Tourist

WILL it not be terrible if our tourists have to confine their sight seeing to their own country for a season?

However there will be compensations. If they come out next year they can wear their old clothes. Again they can go through the Panama canal and if they can get the ships to sail down to Valparaiso, cross the Andes and come home by Buenos Ayres and Rio, and that is some trip. Even at home they can see old Shasta and Hood and St. Helens and Ranier and Alaska and maybe old Lassen will get up some special fireworks for their entertainment.

Then there are Yosemite and Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon.

They will not be entirely bereft.

The Cure For Wars

OUR government has proclaimed its neutrality in the present upheaval beyond the Atlantic. Of course that is altogether right, but if we can reconcile all our troubles and advance as much in the coming fifty years as we have in the past fifty years, by that time the counsel of our country to belligerents will be potential, even in Europe. Before that time comes our hope is that a contract to submit difficulties to arbitration will become international law with such penalties attached for breaking it, as will cause the most rapacious power of the old world to hesitate when the lust of conquest urges on a war. That should have been pressed with more diligence and energy during the past ten years.

The Locomotive's Work

ON the 25th of August, 1914, just one hundred years ago, George Stephenson, driver of a ginhouse at a colliery, brakesman, and clock cleaner, constructed the traveling engine "My Lord," which successfully drew a train of eight loaded cars for the proprietors of the Killingworth colliery. His locomotive had made steam traction possible. Others had made partial successes with clogged wheeled machines but not until the grasshopperlike engine of Stephenson, with its walking beam like that of a modern sidewheel steamer, puffed up-grade at six miles an hour was the traveling engine deemed commercially feasible. The Stockton & Darlington railway rejected animal power, following Stephenson's advice to adopt steam engines. Fifteen years later his engine "Stourbridge Lion" was sent to the United States, and Horatio Allen ran it over a track of hemlock rails, silencing the jeers of the experts. On July 24, 1914, the last day of the century of steam locomotion, the new 410-ton centipede locomotive of the Erie railroad pulled 250 loaded cars, weighing 21,000 tons.